THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) to (c) Blue Dye has been introduced to PDS Kerosene in order to visually distinguish it from kerosene marketed by Parallel marketeers and sold under parallel marketing system. To start with, 48 locations supplying about 70 per cent of total kerosene quantity in the country have been covered. The rest of the locations in the country are being covered in a phased manner.

Regularisation of casual workmen

2914. SHRI MD. SALIM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have framed any policy under which causal workmen can be regularised in a set period of time, if not, whether such policy is under consideration and the time framed fixed, if any; and

(b) whether Government are looking for abolishing the casual employment system in IOC and if so, what steps are being taken to implement the principle "Equal pay for equal work" and other statutory benefits like P.F., Bonus, LTC, Medical benefits etc.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) IOS is engaging casuals for unskilled jobs. IOC is meeting the statutory requirements with regard to payment of wages and providing ESI benefits. Ex-gratia payment according to the Bonus Act is made to the eligible casuals as they are not in regular employment of IOC. PF is not paid. LTC benefit is not granted as the same is payable to only regular employees.

Opening of New LPG agencies in Darjeeling

2915. SHRI RATNA BAHADUR RAI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received representations/applications from the people of different areas in Darjeeling for opening new LPG agencies in view of the growing scarcity of fuel in those areas;

(b) if so, what steps Government contemplate to take thereon; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) to (c) Requests are received from time to time from various parts of the country including Darjeeling for opening of more LPG distributorships. As per present policy places having population of 20,000 and above are considered for setting up LPG distributorships in a phased manner subject to economic viability and product availability.

Supreme Court's order regarding contract labour in LPG plants of IOC at Shakurbasti

2916. SHRI MD. SALIM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Supreme Court passed an order on 23rd March, 1987 to the effect that Contract Labour working in Shakurbasti LPG Plant of Indian Oil Corporation will be employed by the Indian Oil Corporation as regular employees;